

2009

Lowell National Historical Park



# Lowell

Preservation and  
Innovation for  
Future Generations



## Moving Forward from the Park's 30th anniversary

Well in advance of 2008 getting underway, the Park was anticipating the arrival of June 5, 2008. It was the anniversary marking 30 years since President Carter signed the legislation establishing Lowell National Historical Park. The park would approach this benchmark year as an opportunity to heighten staff, partner, and community engagement. A staff retreat, a community insight committee, 'white papers', and a charette considering potential scenarios provided the input sought for moving the Park forward. Themes emerged outlining opportunities for the future.

On June 6, The Lowell Plan hosted a celebratory breakfast to honor the Park's anniversary. U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas, U.S. Senator John Kerry, along with City, community, and Park representatives addressed the crowd of four hundred at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium. A video and live performance presentation, with the enthusiastic participation of the Pyne Arts Singers, reminded all from where Lowell has evolved and suggested where it may move to in the future... Timely announcements at the event included a pending visit to Lowell from the Second Century Commission looking at the future of the National Park Service as well as the kick off of a new partnership initiative, The Paul E. Tsongas Center, building on existing successes in experiential education and expanding on Paul Tsongas' legacy of leadership, civic engagement, public policy, and research.

*Pyne Arts School Singers celebrate the Park's  
30th anniversary at  
The Lowell Plan Breakfast in June.*



## Exporting the Lowell Experience

### ■ Paul E. Tsongas Center

U.S. Rep. Niki Tsongas described the nascent partnership of the Paul E. Tsongas Center during the Park's 30th anniversary event in June. "The new mission is to continue the excellent learning programs at the center, and also conduct research, and develop projects that deepen the public's understanding of industrial history and urban issues. The center will also promote the value of public service in communities and local government.

The new Tsongas Center will place a special emphasis on preservation and sustainability in mid-sized cities. This new initiative is yet another example of the creative spirit, indeed the revolutionary spirit that has dominated and driven our city's history."



### ■ Public Matters: Empowering Lowell's Leaders

An initiative of the Paul E. Tsongas Center, which is an educational and civic partnership of Lowell National Historical Park, The Lowell Plan, Inc., Middlesex Community College, and UMass Lowell. Launched in pilot form in January, 2009, Public Matters integrates experiential education, public policy, and civic engagement & leadership strands of the Tsongas Center programs. The mission of Public Matters is to foster and enhance the knowledge and skills of emerging leaders in Lowell. Throughout this program, members will learn how to contribute more effectively to a diverse and mutually supportive community. Public Matters will ensure that the Lowell of tomorrow will be served by inspired stewards of our history, natural resources, social and cultural capital, and economic and government institutions.

### ■ Second Century Commission:

With the Centennial of the National Park Service approaching in 2016, the National Parks and Conservation Association convened a commission of noted authorities from around the country. In October, the Second Century Commission visited Lowell, one of only five National Parks in the country to host this working group. While here, they focused on goals that included examining the lessons learned from Lowell National Historical Park's experience. While considering how synergistic leadership approaches benefit Parks, the distinguished participants explored and investigated Lowell and its partnerships by way of an agenda filled with numerous encounters around the historic city. During their visit, Commissioner Sally Jewell, CEO of REI, observed that the results of the Lowell project had gone beyond what even Paul Tsongas and its creators had envisioned. The fact that NPS involvement was 'forever' seemed to have been a key ingredient for its success. She added that diversity in its leadership had been important, as well.

*Second Century Commission  
members engage with Lowell  
participants during  
Wannalancit gathering.*



## The Evolving Footprint: Park and City

### ■ Farther Along: Canalway and Riverwalk

On December 1, federal, state, city, and community representatives joined the park to celebrate the opening of the Western Canalway between Broadway and Dutton Streets. With the soon-to-reopen American Textile History Museum across the canal and street improvements along Suffolk Street, this path between the Acre neighborhood and downtown is already well-travelled.



*Anne Barton, Diane Tradd, US Representative Niki Tsongas, John Fitzgerald, Mayor Caulfield, MA Representative Kevin Murphy, Michael Creasey, and Bernie Lynch join in cutting the ribbon on a new stretch of the Western Canalway.*

### ■ Park Boundary Expansion

Public Law 110-229 added key lands to the boundaries of Lowell National Historical Park thanks to the diligence of the Congressional delegation beginning with U.S. Rep. Meehan and reaching completion with U.S. Rep. Tsongas. Though the five parcels total under one acre altogether, they each are a key to the contiguous route for the publicly accessible canalway to connect with the Pawtucket Canal itself. The legislation, initially filed in 1997, was signed as law on May 8, 2008. And they say patience is a virtue!

### ■ Concord River Greenway

The footprint of the City's water-linked walkways is extended with the start of construction along the Concord River Greenway by the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust. A dramatic piece of art by Wopo Holup, inspired by the Concord River itself, graced the walls of the Boott Mill Gallery in November and December where the Trust hosted their annual meeting.



*Concord River inspired art created by Wopo Holup.*

### ■ Hamilton Canal District

Progress continues on the strategic Hamilton Canal District (HCD) development, a thirteen acre urban redevelopment project in the historic district. The Park has worked alongside the City, Trinity Financial and ICON Architecture as this project has emerged. The inclusion of the Park's current parking lot at the Visitor Center has been proposed as a key element of the project, prompting the park to initiate a general management plan amendment. The HCD development presents opportunities to conceptualize a new park entry and visitor orientation area serving as Lowell's cultural tourism gateway and multi-modal transportation center.

### ■ Swamp Locks or Bust!

During the inaugural tour through Swamp Locks in May, partners and the public joined Park staff as the boat smoothly traversed this section of the Pawtucket Canal from Swamp Locks to Lower Locks. Thankfully the 21st century experience was not at all like that of the public observing the first opening of the Swamp Locks in 1796 when the construction failed and water engulfed spectators, washing them "promiscuously" down the canal.



### ■ Rolling Along

Transportation consulting firm, TranSystems/Stone Consulting & Design is undertaking a feasibility study of the expansion of trolley service in the city beyond the Park's current system. For this study, the Park has partnered with The Lowell Plan, the City of Lowell, Trinity Financial, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, Seashore Trolley Museum, and other community partners.



### ■ Boston & Maine Railroad Depot

For many years, the Rialto Building, or Boston & Maine Railroad Depot, has known the ebb and flow of curiosity. The exterior rehabilitation, by the Park and NPS Northeast Region Building Conservation Branch stabilized the structure and replaced the distinctive towers re-establishing this as a Central Street landmark. The outlook for future activity filling the square footage of the Depot was heightened in March with the building's transfer to Middlesex Community College as a future student cultural and performance center.



*With reference to doubling the Park's money, Carole Cowan, President of Middlesex Community College, gladly hands two dollars over to Superintendent Michael Creasey. The Lowell Historic Preservation Commission had obtained the building in 1989 for one dollar.*

## Preserving the Spirit of Place

### Lowell Heritage Partnership

"The Lowell Heritage Partnership (LHP) is an alliance formed in 2000 to preserve and enhance Lowell's natural, built, and cultural heritage through community partnership. The founders believe that the protection, preservation, and enhancement of Lowell's historic, natural, and cultural resources have been and will continue to be the foundation for Lowell's successful economic revitalization. Members of the alliance are proud "friends" of Lowell National Historical Park and look forward to collaborating with the Park on initiatives announced at the 30th anniversary celebration."

— Richard Lockhart, Chairman, Lowell Heritage Partnership

## Pathways to Learning

### Tsongas Industrial History Center:

As a partnership of the Park and the University of Massachusetts Lowell, the Center hosts legions of students and educators annually. During the summer, 136 educators with enrollment from 34 different states participated in the National Endowment for the Arts funded workshop, "Inventing America: Lowell and the Industrial Revolution."



# 136 Educators from 34 States

## Thoughtful Giving and Stewardship

### Going Solar at Boott Mills:

The roof of the Boott Cotton Mills museum offers a massive surface with great solar exposure. Funding made available from the NPS Centennial Initiative and the partnership with the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative has provided equipment and infrastructure to tap this energy. By adding solar panels to the roof, a direct-current electrical system is now in place that adjusts to the sun's intensity. Future expansion of this system is planned.



Among the stewardship activities, the Park is the beneficiary of cleanup efforts by numerous organizations and dedicated individuals throughout the year. Seeking an opportunity to acknowledge Earth Day, National Grid organized 100 volunteers with equipment to work on clean-ups along the Western Canal during their 2008 event.



## Youth: The (Next) Greatest Generation

Engaging youth is essential to the Park's future, and partners are a critical ingredient to successfully sustaining the youth programs in Lowell.

Energy builds each summer as the core Park staff expands adding many students and other seasonal employees, program staff, and volunteers. For many years, Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI) has been a cosponsor of the Spindle City Corps (SCC) summer employment program with the Park, assuring maintenance projects are completed while stewardship and leadership development is also a part of the agenda. In 2008, Centennial Initiative funding from the National Park Service brought the support needed for SCC to become a year 'round program. The NPS Youth Partnership Program supported the Youth Theater Program... Consider the roles these young adults will hold in 2016, the 100th anniversary of the NPS!

Numerous youth programs from around New England culminated in the Youth Summit held in Lowell in August. Robin Snyder, the NPS Northeast Region's Youth Program Coordinator, joined representatives from the programs in celebrating the summer's accomplishments.



Students from Lowell High School portrayed renowned Lowell characters as part of the Youth Theater Program under the aegis of the Spindle City Corps through CTI and in partnership with the Park.

Middlesex Community College Day of Service in October linked students with the Park through service projects in the front and backyard of MCC's downtown campus.



More than **2,500** volunteers  
over **116,000** hours of energy,  
enthusiasm, and passion in 2008.



**Committed Stewardship** — Lowell National Historical Park's Volunteer-in-Parks Program

## Lowell Summer Music Series

During the 2008 season, 32,250 concertgoers enjoyed the evening setting of Boarding House Park with twenty-five performances, among them: Lucinda Williams, Richard Thompson, Brandi Carlile, and Levon Helm. An equally outstanding 20th season lineup is planned for 2009, including Joan Baez, Los Lobos, Ani DiFranco and more.

See [www.lowellsummermusic.org](http://www.lowellsummermusic.org)



## Lowell Folk Festival

“Fantastic”, “energetic”, “absorbing”, “spectacular” are some of the delighted descriptions of the 2008 Lowell Folk Festival. The 22nd Festival, produced by the City of Lowell, Greater Merrimack Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, Lowell National Historical Park, Lowell Festival Foundation, and the National Council for the Traditional Arts, presented 20 musical performers at 6 stages. Fourteen traditional New England Craft Masters demonstrated their talents at the craft area while more than a dozen local ethnic groups prepared and sold traditional foods to the visitors. A dedicated corps of volunteers worked in the planning and execution of the festival clocking over 22,000 hours to make it happen.

See [www.lowellfolkfestival.org](http://www.lowellfolkfestival.org)



## Hats Off

A creative crew of Park staff and volunteers designed and built a whimsical float that was topped off with a giant-scale Ranger hat celebrating the Park's 30th anniversary. Employees, volunteers, youth program participants, and other supporters accompanied the Mayor's award-winning float during the City of Lights Parade through downtown in November.



## Lowell National Historical Park

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